



Good morning! We are here to celebrate and defend freedom of information and the free exchange of ideas that is necessary to sustain our democracy. Together, we celebrate public media -- of the people, by the people and for the people!

Over 170 million Americans rely on public media everyday. And I am proud to be here with you this morning to be counted as one of those Americans. Public media is important to me - as a Member of Congress, as a citizen, and as a parent.

When I get in my car in St. Paul - I listen to Minnesota Public Radio. At the start of my day in Washington, I listen to MPR online. When I sit down in my living room at home - I love to watch Twin Cities Public Television.

Our state is a center of global excellence in public media. Public broadcasting is an important part of our community - and our economy. Last year, Minnesota Public Radio received 5 percent of its budget from federal sources. These funds, along with many direct listener and view contributions, support almost 800 jobs across the state.

The federal partnership with community public media keeps our families educated and makes our communities stronger. We're here today because the future of public broadcasting is under threat. Last week - House majority Republicans passed a bill that would eliminate all federal funding for public broadcasting. The bill makes billions in community cuts to our children's education, the safety of our food, our public safety, and the safety of our roads and infrastructure - the list goes on and on and on.

Our community is under attack, even as it recovers from the worst recession since the Great

Depression. Congress needs to be focused on keeping America's economic recovery moving forward --but the Republican bill will destroy over 800,000 jobs nationwide. The Republican-passed bill doesn't actually make a dent in this year's \$1.6 trillion federal deficit.

And I want to talk for a minute about the deficit.

We need to make smart decisions about our future. That means smart investments in our children's education, safe and efficient infrastructure and research -- while tackling the deficit with smart cuts.

What do I mean by smart cuts?

- CUT funding for NASCAR NOT cuts to heating for seniors and vulnerable Minnesotans.
- CUT \$46 billion in special tax earmarks for oil and gas corporations NOT cuts to research in clean energy technology.
- CUT \$140 billion in tax cuts for the wealthiest 2 percent of Americans NOT cuts to health care and nutrition for pregnant women, mothers and children.

Deficits are real and choices need to be made. But modest investments in public broadcasting did not create the federal deficit. And eliminating federal funding for public media isn't going to solve America's deficit problem. In fact - I believe public media is more important than ever - to ensure the free and open exchange of ideas and information.

I am fighting against the total elimination of federal funding because Minnesota Public Radio and Twin Cities Public Television and Ampers are critical community assets that deserve our support. I am fighting for the free exchange of ideas and information, and for saving hundreds of good jobs in this city and this state. Most importantly - I am fighting to protect public broadcasting because you want me to fight!

Thanks for being here this morning - together we are going to win this fight!

(Remarks as prepared.)